

**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks. Claims 1-24 are currently pending in this application, of which claims 1 and 14 are independent. In the Final Office Action dated August 8, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,000,178 ("*Messinger*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,928,625 ("*Makinen*").

In response, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 14 to more particularly definite the claimed invention. No new subject matter has been added. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, at page 23, paragraph 91, and at page 24, paragraph 92. Applicants submit that amended claims 1 and 14 and their respective dependent claims 2-13 and 15-24 overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Specifically, amended claims 1 and 14 recite a user interface or a method for guiding a user through a task requiring user interaction in a plurality of ordered steps including, among other things, "indicating a selected one of the two or more ordered steps, wherein at least one step not previously performed and not immediately following the selected step in the ordered steps is selectable by a user." This process allows the user to proceed or skip directly to another not yet performed step that is not immediately following the selected step in the active roadmap. (See Applicants' disclosure, at page 23, paragraph 91.) The ability to skip to another unperformed step is advantageous because "[a]s users become more proficient with the system, the present disclosure

contemplates that users may reduce the level of guidance provided by the interface. Thus, user interfaces designed according to the teachings of the disclosure provide simple, low-level guidance to new users, [while] allowing the user to tailor the system as his experience increases." (See Applicants' disclosure, at page 10, paragraph 49.)

The Examiner conceded that *Messinger* fails to show or suggest the above features. Instead, the Examiner asserted that *Makinen*, in its FIG. 9, shows "at least one step not immediately following the selected step in the ordered steps is selectable by a user." Office Action, page 3. Applicants submit that FIG. 9 of *Makinen* simply "illustrates . . . the objects corresponding to previously completed steps 'Process Step 2' and 'Process Step 4' have been visually distinguished by removing the checked-box object and highlighting the border of the object to indicate that the corresponding step is to be completed again." Col. 3, lines 48-56. Therefore, *Makinen* merely allows some of the previously completed steps to be repeated and fails to show or suggest "at least one step not previously performed and not immediately following the selected step in the ordered steps is selectable by a user," as required by amended independent claims 1 and 14.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that at least because both *Messinger* and *Makinen* fail to show or suggest each and every feature of amended independent claims 1 and 14, the combination of *Messinger* and *Makinen* cannot render obvious amended claims 1 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants also submit that dependent claims 2-13 and 15-24 depend from independent claims 1 and 14,

respectively, and are, therefore, also not rendered obvious by the combination of references under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

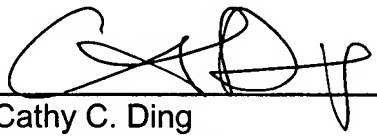
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
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